

9. The Book of Philippians 1:27-2:2

Joy in Unity-Part 2

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(6-4-23)

Find this weeks' sermon audio and video message [HERE](#).

We have begun a study in Paul's letter to the Philippians—looking at its theme of 'joy' topically.

So far we've looked at:

- I. Joy in Fellowship—1:3-6
- II. Joy in Proclaiming the Gospel—1:12-18
- III. Joy of Faith—1:25
- IV. Joy in Unity—1:27-2:2

Philippians 1:27–2:2 (NKJV)

²⁷ Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. ²⁹ For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, ³⁰ having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear *is* in me. ¹ Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being of one accord*, of one mind.

The heart of Paul being expressed in this passage out of Philippians—is unity among the people of God.

Seven times in these verses Paul, using various phrases, expresses his hope that the Philippian Christians will walk in unity with one another:

➤ *Why was the subject of unity so important to Paul?*

It was important because he knew that not only is it essential for *joy*—he knew it is essential for victory in our battle against the devil. It is the devil's goal to create *disunity* and *strife* because he knows they create division—and division will destroy marriages, families, churches and even nations:

Matthew 12:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ ..."Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house [family] divided against itself will not stand.

Unity is of the Holy Spirit—whereas *division* is of the devil whose main strategy is '*divide and conquer*.'

Since unity is essential for victory over the devil—God commands us to do all that we can to *promote* unity in the Body of Christ.

One of the greatest passages on Christian unity in the New Testament comes out of Ephesians 4.

In Ephesians 4, Paul spends the first 16 verses stressing the importance of unity as being essential if we are to properly represent and serve Jesus as His Body on the earth until His return.

In Ephesians 4 verses 3 and 13 Paul talks about the *basis* for our unity with one another as believers in Christ—*"endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (v.3)* and then in verse 13 he says—*"till we all come to the unity of the faith..."*

In these verses Paul speaks of 2 kinds of Christian unity: **A. Unity of the Spirit;** and **B. Unity of the faith.**

A. Unity of the Spirit

Ephesians 4:1-3 (NKJV)

¹I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

In Ephesians 4:3 the Greek verb used here is a present participle which means—*"We must constantly be endeavoring to maintain this unity"*—Why? Because it will constantly be under attack from the devil (think of marriage).

In Ephesians 4:1-3 Paul speaks of the importance of *maintaining* our unity as Christians—but then in verses 4-6, he goes on to give us the 7 spiritual realities that make up our unity and bind us together as one in Christ:

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

So here in verses 4-6 Paul names 7 spiritual realities that unite all true Christians together:

1. One Body—v.4a

This of course is referring to the 'Body of Christ' containing all true believers spread across the world and throughout the centuries—from Pentecost to the Rapture (the Church Age).

The great theme of the epistle to the Ephesians is *"in Christ."*

To be *"in Christ"* means to be a member of His Body and members of one another as truly and intimately as the various parts of a human body work together as a single unit—for the overall health and function of that body.

2. One Spirit—v.4b

Once a person receives Jesus as their Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of them—which unites all believers together in one Body in Christ and makes spiritual unity a reality.

1 Corinthians 12:12–14, 27 (NLT)

¹² The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.

¹³ Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized [not speaking of water baptism] into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. ¹⁴ Yes, the [physical] body has many different parts, not just one part...²⁷ All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

So, when we received Jesus as our Savior we were baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit—and we became one with each other *positionally* (an invisible spiritual unity). Yet Paul wasn't satisfied with just the *positional* unity that we enjoy by virtue of being "*in Christ (saved)*."

He knew that we must endeavor (strive) to maintain *practical* unity constantly or the devil will steal it from us and replace it with division and defeat (think of marriage).

When Paul admonished us in Ephesians 4:3 to "**endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**"—the word '**Spirit**' in the Greek is 'pneuma' which means both '*spirit*' and '*breath*.'

Breath equals *life*—if there is no breath in a physical body—that body is *dead*. Even so the Body of Christ is a *living* entity by virtue of the Spirit of God (the Spirit of Life—the Breath of God) living within us.

Without the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church we would become a corpse—a *dead* organization and not a *living* Body.

Unfortunately, many people think of the Church as an *organization*—but that is fundamentally incorrect. The Scriptures teach that the Church isn't an organization—it's an *organism*! The big difference between an organism and an organization is that—one has life and the other does not.

As one author put it—

"A corpse is organized—it has all of the limbs in the right place, the bone structure is intact, all the organs are in the right spot and connected to the right things—everything is there but it's not alive. At this point it's an organization but it has ceased being an organism.

The dictionary defines an organization as a 'structured system'—but it defines an organism as a 'living system.'"

So again, the Scriptures teach that the Church isn't a dead organization—it's a living organism! It's living because Jesus, Who is alive, is its Head and because the very 'life breath' of God, the Holy Spirit (pneuma-breath) fills its members.

We are all living members of the Body of Christ, knit together by the Holy Spirit and given various gifts and ministries that the Church, the Body of Christ, might live and grow and serve the Lord effectively in unity.—

Ephesians 4:15–16 (NLT)

¹⁵ ...we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

So, believers in Jesus have a spiritual unity with one another by virtue of the Holy Spirit living inside of us—Who binds us together into one Body in Christ.

This unity of the Spirit is so real and powerful that it even surpasses the unity we have with our own flesh and blood family members. And yes, just as in a human family, there are quarrels and disagreements within the family of God—but that doesn't negate the unity that is ours in Christ.

While, quarrels and disagreements among the people of God can damage our witness to the world—they can never change the fact that our unity with one another is eternal and will never change—all because of the “one Spirit” (Holy Spirit) living in us. (John 14:16)

But what does that look like in the local church—what practical things must we do to promote unity?

Ephesians 4:25–29, 5:1-2 (NLT)

²⁵ So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶ And “don't sin by letting anger control you.” Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil. ²⁸ If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. ²⁹ Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them...³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. ¹ Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. ² Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us...

1. One Body—v.4a

2. One Spirit—v.4b

3. One Hope of your Calling—v.4c

Many believe Paul is talking about salvation—well, no. These people were already saved—and you don't hope for what you already have!

The Philippians were being persecuted for their faith, and the hope they were looking forward to was the Rapture—i.e., Jesus coming for His bride and taking them home.

The hope of the Rapture contains several different hopes attached to it—let me list them:

a. The hope of escaping coming global judgment (Revelation 6 through 19)

Titus 2:13 (NKJV)

¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ [speaking of the Rapture...]

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

b. The hope of sinless perfection

1 John 3:2 (NKJV)

² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Of course, John is also referring to the Rapture—which as we wait for it will also help us to live in unity with each other as Christians—but how?

You see, looking for the return of Jesus is one of the best ways not to get tangled up in the cares of this life but also, as John went on to say—it's a great way to keep us pure and free from sin:

1 John 3:2–3 (NKJV)

² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ **And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**

This means, in part, that the believer who keeps their eyes on Jesus' return will not get caught up in petty arguments and divisions—in other words, they will be 'peacemakers' not 'troublemakers.'

c. The hope of a new perfect glorified body

1 Corinthians 15:50–53 (NKJV)

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

Now, last but not least—

d. The hope of heaven

Colossians 1:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ ...Christ in you, the hope of glory.

4. One Lord—v.5a

The word "*Lord*" isn't a name it's a title—a title for the one who controls your life (your master)—the one whom you obey.

John 10:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

Luke 6:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

Someone has said, "*It's difficult to believe how people who claim to believe in and obey the same Lord can't seem to walk in unity with each other.*"

Yet this is the sad reality in so many churches and among so many Christians—but listen, they don't really have a *unity* problem—they have a Lordship problem.

➤ *“What does that mean?”*

As we said at the beginning of this message, unity is essential for victory—but so is obedience to all Jesus commanded us as His followers. But obedience will only be a reality if we really love Jesus more than we love ourselves and our sin.

You see, Jesus told us, **“If you love me, obey my commandments.” (John 14:15)**—in other words, *“If you say you love Me—prove it by obeying Me!”*

Let me say it again, your obedience to Jesus will be directly tied to how much you love Him.

Victory in spiritual warfare is very simple—if you're going to be a victorious Christian—if you're going to overcome and devil and the world—you must obey the Lord Jesus. If you're going to consistently obey Jesus—you must put Him first in your life and love Him supremely above everything and everyone—

Mark 12:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ *And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* ' This is the first [the supreme] commandment.

Listen to me, so much of our defeat in the Christian life is because—we're trying to have victory in our own strength because it will benefit our lives in some way—but in reality, our love for Jesus really isn't the issue—self-love is the issue.

And when that happens, when Jesus really isn't our first love (self is), all kinds of problems result—problems that many Christians don't even realize are tied to their lack of love for and obedience to the Lord Jesus.

Look, let me come at this from a slightly different perspective.

So many Christians have marital problems and financial problems and they come to church wanting the pastor to basically fix their problems from the pulpit or in counseling—but a pastor can't fix a problem that really isn't the problem!

➤ *“What in the world are you talking about?!”*

Show me a husband who doesn't cherish his wife, who doesn't sacrifice himself for her according to God's command to him in Ephesians 5:25-28, but instead is always demanding that she submit, submit, submit and I'll show you a man who doesn't have a marriage problem—he has a Lordship problem!

And by the same token, show me a wife who doesn't respect and submit to her husband according to God's command to her in Ephesians 5:22-24, but is always challenging him, who seldom if ever submits to him when she disagrees with the decisions he makes—and I'll show you a woman who doesn't have a marriage problem—she has a Lordship problem!

Likewise, show me a Christian couple who have spent themselves into financial debt to the point of bankruptcy by buying everything they see and 'can't live without'—in disobedience to Jesus' command in Matthew 6:19-21—and I'll show you a couple who don't have a financial problem—they have a Lordship problem!

We could apply this to many of the issues and problems we face in our Christian life. Show me a Christian who harbors resentment and bitterness or even hatred in their heart for members of different races, political affiliations, towards co-workers or their boss or towards those who have hurt or wronged them in some way.

Show me a Christian like that and I'll show you a Christian who doesn't have relational problems—they have a Lordship problem.

Remember it was the Lord Jesus who commanded us husbands to love our wives like Christ loved the Church; and the wives to respect and submit to their husbands as the Church does to Christ; and Christians to love one another (John 13:34-35).

It was the Lord Jesus who commanded us to even love our enemies. (Matthew 5:43-45)

If your love for Jesus is not greater than any difference you have with others—be it marital, political, racial, economic, or any other issue or conflict you may have with another and refuse to die to self with regard to—make no mistake about it—you have a Lordship problem.

When we refuse to love and forgive people who have hurt us or wronged us (especially our spouse)—the problem isn't with them, the problem is with us.

➤ *What is the problem?* (let's just be brutally honest)—we are demonstrating self-love.

We are loving ourselves more than we love Jesus—we are flat out demonstrating that we are not in love with Him but are more in love with ourselves. Self-love is at the heart of all of our problems in marriage and in the Church—and disunity and division are at the top of the list.

Our topic for this current series of messages out of Philippians is—"Joy in Unity."

But there can be no unity where we only want our way—and/or, where we refuse to forgive those who have wronged and hurt us. Self-love rooted in pride is an evil weed that will choke out all the beautiful fruits of the Holy Spirit in our heart and lives—especially joy in unity.

There is no joy in disunity and division—only hurt and anger and sadness.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).